

What is claimed is:

1. Apparatus for facilitating the servicing of a telecommunications device having a chassis, electronic modules, a backplane, and pin connectors connecting the electronic modules to the backplane, the apparatus comprising:

a catch basin module insertable into a slot in the telecommunications device in which at least one of the electronic modules would normally be disposed, said catch basin module including:

a rear wall having a window, said window being dimensioned to surround a group of pin connectors disposed on the backplane behind the slot into which said catch basin module is insertable; and

a bottom surface disposed below said window which abuts the backplane under the pin connectors when said catch basin module is inserted into the slot,

wherein when pins in the pin connectors are pushed out of the pin connectors from a rear side of the backplane, the pins fall onto said bottom surface of said catch basin module and do not fall into the chassis of the telecommunications device.

2. An apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein said bottom surface comprises a ledge projecting out from said catch basin module and having a channel and an upturned distal end, wherein when the pins fall onto said ledge, the pins are retained in said channel.

3. An apparatus according to Claim 1, said catch basin module further comprising a bottom panel having an upper surface, said bottom surface comprising an angled lip projecting out from said catch basin module, wherein when the pins fall from the pins connectors, the pins

strike the angled lip, roll down said angled lip, and come to rest on said upper surface of said bottom panel.

4. An apparatus according to Claim 1, said rear wall being substantially vertical, wherein when said catch basin module is inserted into the slot, said rear wall blocks access to a portion of the backplane thereby protecting the backplane.

5. An apparatus according to Claim 1, said catch basin module further comprising: a bottom panel and side walls disposed on opposite sides of said bottom panel, wherein when said catch basin module is inserted into the slot, said side walls block access to electronic modules immediately adjacent to the slot, thereby protecting the adjacent electronic modules.

6. An apparatus according to Claim 1, said catch basin module further comprising an upper panel and a leaf spring disposed on said upper panel, wherein when said catch basin module is inserted into the slot, said leaf spring biases against the chassis and stabilizes said catch basin module.

7. An apparatus according to Claim 1, said catch basin module further comprising a handle disposed on a front side of said catch basin module to assist in placing and removing said catch basin module into the slot.

8. An apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein said catch basin module is dimensioned to be as wide as at least one of the electronic modules.

9. An apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein said catch basin module is dimensioned to be as wide as three of the electronic modules.

10. Apparatus for facilitating the servicing of a telecommunications device having electronic modules, a backplane, and pin connectors connecting the electronic modules to the backplane, comprising:

a catch basin module insertable into a slot in the telecommunications device in which at least one of the electronic modules would normally be disposed, said catch basin module receiving and collecting pins to be pushed from a rear side of the backplane out of the backplane.

11. A method of servicing a pin connector in a telecommunications device having electronic modules, a backplane, and pin connectors connecting the electronic modules to the backplane without requiring the telecommunications device to be taken off-line comprising the steps of:

removing an electronic module which is disposed in front of the pin connector to be serviced;

inserting a catch basin module having a rear window and an interior into the slot formerly occupied by the removed module so that the rear window surrounds the pin connector to be serviced; and

pushing the pin in the pin connector from the rear of the backplane so that the pin falls into the catch basin module.

12. A method according to Claim 11, wherein said removing step further comprises the steps of removing a plurality of electronic modules including the electronic module disposed in front of the to-be-serviced pin connector and at least one electronic module adjacent to the electronic module disposed in front of the to-be-serviced pin connector.

13. A method according to Claim 11, wherein said removing step further comprises the step of removing three electronic modules in total including the electronic module disposed in front of the to-be-serviced pin connector and adjacent electronic modules on either side thereof.

14. A method according to Claim 11, wherein said inserting step further comprises the step of blocking access to pin connectors other than the pin connector to be serviced with at least one wall of the catch basin module and thereby protecting the pin connectors.

15. A method according to Claim 11, wherein said inserting step further comprises the step of blocking access to a portion of the backplane disposed behind the slot into which the catch basin is inserted with at least a rear wall of the catch basin module and thereby protecting the backplane.

16. A method according to Claim 11, wherein said inserting step further comprises the step of blocking access to the electronic modules disposed adjacent to the slot into which the catch basin is inserted with side walls of the catch basin module and thereby protecting the adjacent electronic modules and electronic components thereon.

17. A method according to Claim 11 further comprising the steps of:  
providing a lip around the rear window; and  
surrounding the to-be-serviced pin connector with the lip.

18. A method according to Claim 11 further comprising the step of inserting a new pin into the pin connector from the front of the backplane through the interior of the catch basin module.